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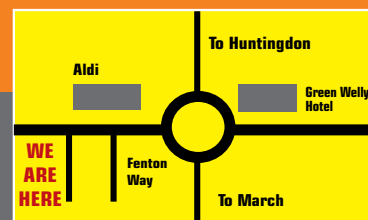


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For Christmas



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WELCOME

You may have lived in the county for five months or five years, but I bet you there is a major attraction nearby which you haven't visited yet?

If you want to head along to Ely Cathedral or Peckover House in Wisbech, now is your chance as there plenty of seasonal events on the way.

Inside you will find that The Weekender and our What's On guide are filled with local events for all the family.

You will find plenty of other seasonal delights in this issue, and remember to email us at discover@archant.co.uk with any interesting thoughts or photos from around the area.

Barry Hunt
Editor
discover@archant.co.uk

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Discover

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THE WEEKENDER

FAMILY DAYS OUT FOR THE MONTHS AHEAD

Stuck for something to do with the children?
Here's our quick guide to family friendly weekend
events coming up over the next few months



ELVES AT ELY

Ely Cathedral Christmas Gift & Food Fair

Venue: Ely Cathedral

Date: Friday and Saturday November 18/19

Times: Friday 10am to 9pm, Saturday 9.30am to 4.30pm

Tickets: adults £4, children under 16 free

Whether you're looking for a special gift, distinctive accessories or unique decorations, you'll be spoilt for choice. With beautiful and affordable items you'll rarely find on the high street, the Ely Cathedral Christmas Gift & Food Fair makes a perfect day out. This year will see several new trade stalls alongside popular exhibitors and an extended Festive Food Hall to make accessing all the hundreds of stalls much easier. The heated Café Marquee offers the perfect location to sit down for a rest and enjoy a selection of refreshments and light lunches.

New for 2016 is an outdoor Street Food Fest which will be open to visitors on Friday evening and Saturday. On Saturday there will be plenty of attractions for children including the popular traditional carousel plus the reindeer and some special Christmas elves. An interesting programme of demonstrations will also feature throughout the two days. Musical entertainment will be provided by the Cathedral Choristers and other local performers. Ticket numbers are limited so booking is advised.

For more information visit www.elycathedral.org



CORE ACTIVITIES

Cambridge University Botanic Garden Apple Day 2016

Venue: Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Cambridge

Date: Sunday October 23

Time: 10am to 4pm

Tickets: adults £5, children under 16 free

Get ready for a bumper crop of apple-related activities and harvest highlights including apple tasting locally-grown and heritage varieties, apple identification (visitors should bring along two to three apples from each mystery tree, preferably with a leaf and stalk attached) and expert advice on apple cultivation.

Plus, youngsters will have the chance to get crafty with a variety of activities in the Schools' Garden. The garden's main lawn marquee will be bursting with locally produced, delicious edibles including hedgerow cordials, fruit-flavoured spirits, hand-pressed juices and ciders, specialty teas, chocolates and artisan cheeses for sale.

Other highlights include free tours, live music, a pet petting pen, gifts and pop-up food stalls.

For more information visit www.botanic.cam.ac.uk

MILL MAGIC

Mill Road Winter Fair

Venue: Mill Road, Cambridge

Date: Saturday December 3

Time: 10am to 4.30pm

Tickets: free

The fair has come a long way from when it started in 2005 with just 40 venues taking part and cars whizzing up and down the road. Now the road is closed to vehicles from East Road to Coleridge Road and opened to parades, eating and all kinds of activities taking place on the vibrant street. The fair keeps expanding with more than 120 local market and food stalls taking part this year.

Highlights for 2016 include a bicycle-themed parade and a fire truckpull along Mill Road. Look out for loads of children's activities at Romsey Mill, Ross Street

Community Centre as well as storytelling in St Barnabas. Chaos and the Cambridge University Museums will be based in St Philip's Church.

Cambridge 105 will be running a stage with live music at Hope Street Yard and will be reporting live on-air from Donkey Common.

The Gwydir Street food market will continue to feed the crowds and has proven so popular that there are food fairs at various sites.

You can even get your fill of local art and jewellery in the Covent Garden Drama Centre.

Come and build a coin picture on top of the bridge after the parade until 3.30pm. If you have any loose change lying around you can bring some coins and participate in making the picture. There will also be a special Santa's Grotto and Winter Wonderland by the Railway Cottages.

After the fair ends at 4.30pm, music will continue well into the evening at the Salisbury Club.

For more information visit www.millroadwinterfair.org



BRANCHING OUT

Autumn Trail

Venue: Peckover House, Wisbech

Dates: Saturday October 22 to Sunday October 30

Time: 11am to 4pm

Tickets: adults £5.25, children £2.60, family £13 (garden only prices)
Explore the garden at Peckover House during Hallowe'en with this trail designed specially for children.

Peckover House is a secret gem, an oasis hidden away in an urban environment. A classic Georgian merchant's town house, it was lived in by the Peckover family for 150 years.

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For more information visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk



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JULIAN CLARY ON TOUR

Comedian, entertainer and novelist Julian Clary has taken his one-man shows around the world numerous times. But, with his new *The Joy of Mincing* run, the household name is coming to the Cambridge Corn Exchange, Bury St Edmunds' Theatre Royal and Peterborough's The Cresset. Here, he talks to us about the new tour, everyday life and more...

Why have you named your tour 'The Joy of Mincing'?

I always like to get 'mincing' into the title. We've had *Lord of the Mince*; *Natural Born Mincer*; and *Mincing Machine* was my first tour in 1989. I don't know why; it sets the tone, doesn't it?

Is the show as rude as ever - you haven't toned things down?

No, I don't think so. It's the one time you can let rip a bit, on stage. I don't want to be filthy for the sake of it, but I think it's a comic device. You just exaggerate who you really are on stage. I'm quite fond of moments of vulgarity.

You've been performing for 30 years.

How has comedy changed during that time?

It's changed beyond all recognition. It used to be an eclectic selection of people in small rooms above pubs, in the 1980s. Our comedy was a reaction against the right-wing men in bow-ties who were being offered as light entertainment in those days.

And has your comedy changed?

Yes, a bit. I think you evolve, whether you want to or not. There was a certain amount of anger and delight in confronting people when I started, which has more or less gone now. Making people laugh is my main aim in life these days. I don't think there's so much to be angry about now.

What sort of stories will you be telling on this tour?

Well, there's a rather long story about how I once saved Joan Collins's life in a swimming pool in St Tropez. It's a true

story, which I won't give away now, but it's a long, meandering tale that fills the first half.

Then the second half is about MBEs. I've noticed a lot of my friends in the business are getting these awards. They're handing them out like Smarties.

I think, 'Ooh, I'd like one of those', but it's never happened so I'm obviously not favoured by the Establishment. I can only blame myself... So during the show, I give myself one and call it 'Mincer of the British Empire'.

I'm making lots of these MBEs and handing them out to people in the audience. Just the lucky few, you understand: it's not included in the ticket price.

I'm always looking for an excuse to talk to the audience. That's what keeps me going.

I'm always very interested in the audience and their stories. People are very funny; they never fail to amuse.

What hobbies do you have?

I used to like yoga, although I haven't been for ages. It started morphing into an encounter group with people talking about their depression and their marriage problems. I just wanted my hamstrings stretched. So I said 'Namaste' and didn't return. I like pottering around my garden. Am I good? I'm very good at walking around and telling my gardener what to do.

What do you think the public perception is of you, and do you think they'd be surprised by your real life? Maybe people imagine I'm camp and outrageous all the time and that I wear full

Julian Clary is bringing his *The Joy of Mincing* tour to Cambridgeshire.



make-up and glittery outfits when I'm at home doing the Hoovering. In fact, I wear just a touch of raspberry lip balm and a drip dry kimono. Just like anyone else.

What would be the best way to approach you, if somebody wanted to come and ask for an autograph?

Send a stamped addressed envelope to my agent. I jest. As long as I'm in a good mood I'll oblige. Autographs, selfies, a sample of my DNA, you only have to ask.

Julian Clary comes to the Cambridge Corn Exchange on October 13, the Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds on October 29 and The Cresset, Peterborough on November 2.



HALL INCLUSIVE

Rich Hall is an award-winning comedian, writer and – weirdly – the inspiration behind a character in *The Simpsons*

By JAMES RAMPTON

Rich Hall is rightly regarded as one of the funniest comedians to come out of the US in recent times.

And, as he is based here most of the time, we in this country have over the past three decades been lucky enough to benefit from his wonderfully grouchy sense of humour.

Now, I'm delighted to report, we are about to enjoy more of his unique, crotchety comedy, as he is setting off on a nationwide tour with his brilliant show, Rich Hall: Live.

The comedian, who has won both a Perrier (Edinburgh Comedy Festival) and a Barry (Melbourne International Comedy Festival)

Award, is the most dazzlingly funny curmudgeon in The West.

Rich's straight-talking and acerbic comedy leaves his targets reeling and his audiences in stitches. He sends up whichever country he is in, but perhaps reserves his most trenchant scorn for his native USA.

But don't just take my word for it. Critics have long praised Rich's highly original deadpan style (which was the inspiration for the marvellously cantankerous barman, Moe Szyslak, in *The Simpsons*).

Rich, who has presented such critically acclaimed BBC 4 documentaries as *Rich Hall's Continental Drifters*, *Rich Hall's The Dirty South*, *How The West Was Lost*, *Rich Hall's Californian Stars*, *Rich Hall's Cattle Drive* and *Rich Hall's Gone Fishing*, begins by underlining how excited he is to be performing live once again.

"I love being on stage. I love the fact that when a live show is over, it's gone. It's happened, and it will never happen like that again. It can't be replicated. That's a great magical moment."

Rich, who is also an accomplished author and has released three books, *Magnificent Bastards*, *I Blame Society* and *Things Snowball*, all published by Abacus Books, thrives on the spontaneity of live comedy.

"In every single show, there are always two or three moments where I'm

thinking, 'Wow, where did that come from?' You're constantly thinking on your feet."

The comedian, who has made very successful appearances on such TV shows as *QI*, *Live At The Apollo*, *Have I Got News For You* and *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*, is especially glad that the tour begins in the Scottish islands.

"I'm really looking forward to going to the nether regions of Scotland," says Rich, who won two Emmys writing for *The David Letterman Show* in the US.

"Every year I try to tour out of the way places. Last year it was Norway. This year it is the Hebrides. I like to go to places where I'm not worried about

competition from other comedians! Audiences also love the fact that you have made the effort to play there."

One of the many unique features of Rich's act is that he goes out of his way to find out about the town he is playing in and then improvises a song on stage

about it. He goes the extra mile to tailor-make his material for that particular venue.

"I try to tap into what is happening locally and address that musically by writing an improvised song based on the town I'm in.

"Once the audience realise you're not just trotting out your regular act, people think, 'He's made a real effort. He's on our side, so we're on his side.

"I like to do something custom-made every night, otherwise you would just be like a robot. That can really wear you down. Nobody gets more sick of hearing their own voice than a comedian."

Rich, who was also enjoyed huge success as his country and western musician alter ego, Otis Lee Crenshaw, adds: "When you're improvising a song, you think, 'I may never do this on again, but it's a special moment for everyone here'.

"You want to reach the point where audiences say 'I'd like to see that guy again'. You want to deliver the goods and be Old Reliable."

The stand-up's other trademark is anger, and he is capable of using that to

very effective comic ends.

"It is always good to articulate anger. If you don't, you're merely preaching to the converted and asking, 'Have you ever noticed?' Yes, we are paying you to notice things we haven't already noticed!"

Rich has just been in the US making *How to Kill a President*, another fascinating sounding BBC4 documentary, this time about negative campaigning in the Presidential race. American politics is bound to feature in his new show.

"People come up to me all the time and ask if Trump can do it, but I promise you, he will not win.

"There is a lot of gnashing of teeth about Trump, but it's merely entertainment. He's doing what he has to do to get attention. He is saying the most outrageous things and tapping into a collective sense of anger."

But, Rich adds: "Eventually Trump will come under the same scrutiny as everyone else. 'So you want to build a giant wall along the border and make the Mexicans pay for it? How are you going to do that, then?'"

The only positive benefit of Trump, Rich believes, is that he is forcing the other Republican candidates actually to say something substantial.

The comedian reckons that: "If the people running had their way, no-one would be watching the campaign at all. But when Trump comes along, everyone has to react and talk about issues – and candidates hate that. God forbid that they have to talk about issues!"

Before he has to go, Rich reflects once more on what he loves so much about touring: "I'm not a big showbiz hound," he muses, "but for me being on stage is the most satisfying thing imaginable."

A sentiment with which Rich's legions of fans would no doubt wholeheartedly agree.

TICKETS

Venue: Cambridge Junction

Date: Monday October 31

Time: 8pm

Tickets: £18

For more information call 01223 511511

or visit www.junction.co.uk

Venue: King's Lynn Corn Exchange

Date: Friday November 11

Time: 8pm

Tickets: £17

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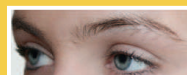
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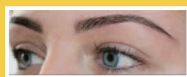
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COSMETIC SURGERY SOARS

A record number of over 51,000 Britons underwent cosmetic surgery in 2015

New data from the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (www.baaps.org.uk); the only organisation solely dedicated to safety and education in cosmetic surgery, and which represents the vast majority of NHS-trained consultant plastic surgeons in private practice; has revealed that the number of cosmetic ops last year grew 13 per cent overall since 2014 - with all procedures seeing an increase in demand.

Surgeons say that with the new trend in A-list celebrities (such as Sharon Stone, Jamie Lee Curtis, Kelly Rowland and Jane Fonda) openly confessing to the odd nip or tuck, it's possible that patients are feeling encouraged by their positive admissions and attractive results. These new attitudes could be one of the drivers for increased acceptance and de-stigmatising of aesthetic enhancement, seven out of 10 of the most popular procedures seeing a double-digit increase.

Women's cosmetic surgery rose 12.5pc from 2014, and while breast augmentation continues to remain the most popular procedure for women (up 12pc from 2014), reportedly the oversized 'glamour model' or artificial look once associated with implants has all but vanished, as surgeons note patients now opting for smaller sizes

for a more natural, proportionate enhancement.

The association also says that some of the most dramatic rises - face/neck lifts (up 16pc) and liposuction (up 20pc) - could be linked to the fact that despite the vast array of non-surgical treatments hyped for these areas in recent years, the public are realising they have limited effect when compared to traditional surgery.

Men, as well, underwent substantially more facial procedures, with face/necklifts climbing 14pc, brow lifts (+15.5pc), eyelid surgery(+15pc), and rhinoplasty (+14pc) all gaining huge popularity. Surgeons suggest that possibly, this may be nudged by the decline of last year's bushy-bearded 'hyper-masculine' (or 'lumbersexual') aesthetic common amongst hipsters. The trends could mean that as men ditched the facial hair and oversized checked shirts they may have uncovered previously-hidden double chins or 'dad bod' bellies fuelling an epic rise of 20pc in male liposuction and a 13pc jump in 'man boob' reductions.

Although men still account for just 9pc of the total number of cosmetic surgery operations in the UK, their numbers have nearly doubled over the past decade (from 2,440 procedures in 2005 to 4,614 in 2015).

According to consultant plastic surgeon and former BAAPS president Rajiv Grover, who collated the audit data; "The 2015 BAAPS audit has shown that demand for cosmetic surgery continues to increase following the quieter period in 2014 which mirrored the British economy. The double digit rise in surgical procedures suggests that the public are choosing to spend on treatments with a proven track record such as facelifts and liposuction which remain as the gold standard for facial rejuvenation and body contouring. The plethora of new non-invasive methods for skin tightening and cellulite that are here today and gone tomorrow, often appear too good to be true and fail to make the cut."

THE TOP SURGICAL PROCEDURES FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN 2015 (TOTAL 51,140):

1. Breast augmentation 9,652 - up 12pc from last year
2. Blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery) 8,689 - up 12pc
3. Face/neck lift 7,419 - up 16pc
4. Breast reduction 6,246 - up 13pc
5. Liposuction 5,551 - up 20pc
6. Rhinoplasty 4,205 - up 14pc
7. Fat transfer 3,261 - up 3pc
8. Abdominoplasty 2,933 - up 8pc
9. Browlift 2,110 - up 7pc
10. Otoplasty (ear correction) 1,074 - up 14pc

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9.30am

Tel: Kathie 07772 868472

Eaton Socon

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Behind the Co-op
superstore
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7.30pm

Tel: Julie 01480 210115

Godmanchester

St Annes C of E School
London Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Kathie 07772 868472

Warboys

Sports and Social Club
Forge Way, Warboys
5.30pm and 7.30pm
Tel: Joanne 07814574659

Kimbolton

The Mandeville Hall,
Thrapston Road
7.30pm

Tel: Di 07554 027640

St Ives

Crossways Christian
Centre
7.30pm

Tel: Amanda 07970
308105

TUESDAY

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5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Kathie 07772 868472

Ramsey

Bury Church Hall
Meadow Lane, Bury
9.30am and 11.30am

Tel: Alison 07809 030081

Ramsey

Ramsey Junior School
Station Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Alison 07809 030081

Eynesbury

Middlefield Primary School,
Andrew Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Oly 07342 651243

St Neots

Priory Junior School,
Longsands Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Ursula 01480 211568

WEDNESDAY

Alconbury

Memorial Hall, School Lane
9.30am

Tel: Joanne 07814 574659

Sawtry

Sawtry Junior School
Middlefield Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Bryan 07960 167910

St Neots

St Neots Bowling Club,
St Anselm Place
9.30am

Tel: Sandra 01480 217656

St Neots

United Reformed Church
Next to Argos
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Solveig 01234 871356

Huntingdon

St Peter's School,
St Peter's Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Claire 07939 625770

THURSDAY

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Crossways Christian
Centre
9.30am, 5.30pm and
7.30pm

Tel: Lol 07766 715533

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Centre
Mayfield Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Di 07554 027640

St Neots

St Neots Town
Football Club
Kester Way, Loves Farm
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Mandy 01480 472086

Huntingdon

Medway Centre,
Off Coneys Road
9.30am

Tel: Emily 07775 927549

Somersham

The Victory Hall
Park Hall Road
5.30pm and 7.30pm

Tel: Emily 07775 927549

Buckden

C.E. Primary School,
School Lane, Buckden,
St Neots
5.30pm and 7.30pm
Tel: Rachel 07940 441918

SATURDAY

Huntingdon

Saxongate Centre
Bradbury Place
8.30am

Tel: Bryan 07960 167910

St Ives

Crossways Christian
Centre
8.30am

Tel: Lol 07766 715533

St Neots

Conservative Club
New Street
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ADOPTING A CAT

When you first adopt a cat or kitten, you will need to help them gently settle in to their new home. Cats Protection offers the following advice...

A change of environment is always stressful for a cat, so it will often take a few weeks for them to feel relaxed in their new abode. Following the advice here will help them to successfully adapt to their new surroundings.

BRINGING YOUR NEW CAT HOME

The first few hours after bringing your cat home can really affect how well they accept their new life. First and foremost, be prepared to be patient and never attempt to rush your cat into doing things they may not be ready for.

It is important to provide them with a quiet place with everything they need, so set aside a dedicated, secure room before you collect them. This room should include:

- an area for food and a separate area for water
- at least one litter tray placed as far away as possible from their food and water and in a private, accessible location
- somewhere to hide
- access to a high spot where they can view their surroundings
- a suitable place to sleep or, ideally, a choice of them
- a scratching post
- a few cat toys and space for them to play

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCENT

Cats rely heavily on their sense of smell and will settle quicker if their new home smells familiar. To help your cat get used to your scent, take an item of clothing or a blanket from your home and leave it with the cat for a few days before you bring them home.

When you pick your cat up, bring the same item back – ideally it will fit comfortably in their carrier with them and then it can be placed in their room.

You could also use a synthetic form of feline facial pheromones, available

from your vet. These come as a plug-in diffuser or a spray. The scent helps to create a reassuring environment and may help to reduce stress.

TRAVELLING HOME

Being territorial and a creature of habit, a cat becomes very attached to their familiar environment and finds travelling very stressful. To help your cat stay calm during journeys, use a strong, secure and easily cleanable carrier, with a familiar smelling blanket inside and cover the carrier with another light blanket. You may wish to spray the inside of the carrier with a pheromone spray at least 15 minutes before putting your cat inside, to allow the alcohol to evaporate. The pheromone can help to create a feeling of familiarity and security.

FIRST STEPS

Take one step at a time, be patient and always work at the cat's pace before moving onto the next stage.

When you arrive home, leave your cat alone to explore their room for an hour or so before introducing yourself, although some cats may need longer. When you go in to see them, get down to their level, put out your hand and call their name softly – let them come to you.

If your cat chooses to hide, just sit quietly in the same room and occasionally talk to them gently in low tones – do not force them to come out. Give them plenty of time to adjust and continue to visit them so they can get used to your presence.

As long as they are eating and using the litter tray, there should be no cause for alarm. If your cat is very timid, they may not want to come out to eat. In this case, try moving the food bowl closer to their hiding place and leaving the room.

You may want to try offering a small

treat or using an interactive toy, such as a fishing rod toy with feathers on the end to tempt your cat from their hiding place. Play is a good bonding tool because it is



less intimidating than physical contact, relieves stress, and provides mental stimulation and an outlet for pent-up energy.

You may find it is easier to encourage play at dawn and dusk when cats are naturally more active.

THE BIG OUTDOORS

Don't let your cat go outside until they have fully adjusted to their new home and knows where their food will be coming from – this usually takes between three and four weeks.

If your cat has not been neutered, don't let them out unsupervised until the operation has been carried out by your vet. Kittens should always be supervised when outdoors.

When you let your cat out, do it when they're hungry so that you can tempt them back inside with food, until they are used to coming back to the house freely.

For more information about Cats Protection visit www.cats.org.uk or phone 03000 12 12 12.

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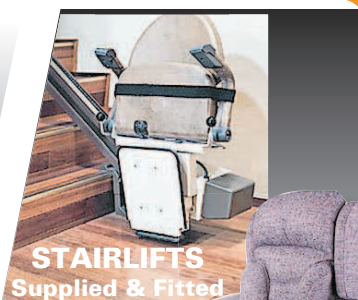


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GOOD FOOD CHAMPIONS

The top entries and award winners from the 2017 Good Food Guide have been revealed

The Good Food Guide (GFG), owned by Waitrose, is a guide to the very best restaurants and eateries across Britain.

Midsummer House in Cambridge has been crowned top restaurant in the East of England and a restaurant in a yurt in North Norfolk has been “an immediate hit with readers”. “Foodie treasure trove” restaurant Upstairs at Baileys in Beccles has also been praised as a best new entry in the guide.

Highly regarded by both chefs and restaurant-goers, the GFG has announced its Top 50 restaurants of the year. Midsummer House is the East of England’s top scoring restaurant, ranking at no. 12 (with a cooking score of 8). The Top 50 recognises the very best talent in the country; a place on the list represents a huge achievement, with each position earned by its score in The Good Food Guide, editor appraisal and strength of reader feedback.

The number one restaurant this year is L’Enclume in Cumbria, which scored a perfect 10 and kept the number one spot for the fourth year running.

Speaking about Midsummer House, Elizabeth Carter, Waitrose Good Food Guide Editor says: “The consensus that this is one of the country’s finest restaurants is amply testified by a succession of reader recommendations. Daniel Clifford’s cooking stands out from the crowd not least because he starts with high quality raw materials, takes seasonality seriously and his dishes aim



PHOTO BY JOHN ROBERTSON

to entice rather than baffle.”

Other notably high scoring restaurants in the East of England are Paris House in Woburn, Alimentum in Cambridge, Morston Hall in Morston and The Café at Brovey Lair in Ovington (all with a score of 6).

The GFG, along with its team of anonymous inspectors and loyal readers, have also uncovered a range of foodie finds in unconventional settings and structures. One of which is reader discovery,

Shuck’s at the Yurt, a restaurant housed in a quirky tent. The yurt eatery is located on the North Norfolk coast in over 40 acres of orchard and run by husband and wife team Philip (head

chef) and Beth Milner.

Elizabeth Carter, who is celebrating 10 years as Consultant Editor of the Waitrose Good Food Guide, said: “From yurts to campsites, bike shops to shipping containers, the vessel in which a good restaurant sails is no barrier to entry in our guide. We look for great food wherever we can find it - and that’s sometimes in highly unusual places.”

Beth Milner said: “We are absolutely delighted and overwhelmed to be featured in The Good Food Guide through recommendation from our customers. As a new business it means so much to be recognised for our great food. We hope to go from strength to strength and have exciting new plans for 2017 from our unique setting in the beautiful Drove Orchards.”

The Good Food Guide is available to buy at Waitrose priced at £12.99 (RRP £17.99).



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APPLE FRITTER DOUGHNUTS

Have you got a bumper crop of fruit? Try this classic recipe for apple fritter doughnuts covered in a sweet glaze

Serves: about 14 doughnuts
Prep time: 3hr 30min
Cook time: 30min
Total time: 4hr

INGREDIENTS:

Dough:

2¼ teaspoons (1 packet) active dry yeast
 ⅔ cup whole milk, warm to the touch
 3¾ cups + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, divided
 4 egg yolks
 ½ cup granulated sugar
 1 cup apple cider
 ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Apples:

¼ cup unsalted butter
 1 vanilla pod
 7 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and chopped
 ¼ cup granulated sugar
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 cup apple cider
 ¼ cup apple cider vinegar

Glaze:

½ cup + 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
 ¼ cup heavy cream
 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 ½ teaspoon kosher salt
 2 quarts vegetable oil, for frying

METHOD:

1. Make the dough: place the yeast in a mixing bowl. Pour the milk over the yeast and let sit for 5min. Add two cups of the flour to the yeast and milk mixture, but do not stir. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place until the surface of the flour cracks, about 30 to 40min.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar. Add the apple cider, melted butter, vanilla, salt, cinnamon, 1¼ cups of the flour and whisk until combined, then add to the yeast mixture. Using an electric mixer, beat the dough on low speed for 30sec, then increase the speed to medium and beat for 1min. Add the remaining two tablespoons of flour and mix on low speed for 30sec, then increase to medium for another 30sec. The dough will be very soft and sticky. Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl, cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and set in a warm place until the dough has doubled in size, about 1½ hours.
3. Make the apples: melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Slice the vanilla pod in half lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the pan with the melted butter and drop the vanilla pod in as well. Heat the butter until it is bubbling, then add the chopped apples, tossing to coat them with butter. Add the sugar and cinnamon and cook for 5min, stirring occasionally. Add the apple cider and vinegar, increase the heat to medium-high, and cook until all of the liquid has evaporated, stirring occasionally, about 10 to 15min. Remove the vanilla pod and transfer the apples to a baking sheet to cool.
4. Assemble the doughnuts: scrape the dough out onto a well-floured surface and pat into a rectangle 2in thick, flouring the surface as necessary. Spread half of the apples over the dough, leaving space around the edges. Fold the dough into thirds (like a letter) by folding the bottom up and then the top down. Use your hands to again pat the dough into another rectangle about 2in thick. Spread the remaining apples on top and fold into thirds again. Gather the dough together in a rough ball and return it to the oiled bowl. Cover and allow to rise until doubled in size, about 30min.
5. Meanwhile, in a casserole dish heat the oil over medium heat to 375degF.
6. Scrape the dough out again onto a well-floured surface and gently pat it out to half-inch thickness, flouring the surface and the dough as necessary.

Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, slice the dough into 1in pieces in a checkerboard pattern.

Shape 4oz portions of the dough into round mounds and allow to rest for 10min.

7. Make the glaze: while the dough is resting, mix together the glaze. Whisk together the powdered sugar, heavy cream, vanilla and salt in a medium bowl set over a small saucepan of simmering water over low heat. Heat and whisk occasionally until the mixture is warm to the touch. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

8. Fry the doughnuts: very carefully drop each mound of dough into the hot oil, only adding as many as will comfortably fit in the pot so they are not crowded. Fry until the underside is golden brown, about 3min, then using a spatula carefully turn them over and continue to cook until the other side is golden brown as well, another 4 to 5min. Remove the doughnuts to a paper towel-lined pan or a cooling rack. Repeat with the remaining doughnuts, allowing the oil to come back up to temperature between batches.
9. After removing each batch of doughnuts, allow them to sit for about 5min, then brush with the glaze. Serve warm or at room temperature.



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Each year millions of visitors head to destinations and attractions throughout the UK by coach, the cleanest form of transport. A coach carrying 50 passengers takes the place of more than 20 cars, freeing up space on the road and in car parks. Passengers help the local economy too – by spending as much as 30 per cent more per head than other visitors.

Coaches are the perfect choice for day trips to attractions and summer garden shows, as well as for visits to see a top show in London's West End. More than

two million people travel to the capital by coach to see a show each year.

Research shows that people like going on a coach tour because everything is organised for you, its value for money and a stress-free way to travel. The exclusive survey, carried out by Mail Newspapers on behalf of the CTC, showed that other elements such as comfort, good legroom and modern facilities on board, local pick-ups and a flexible itinerary were also voted as essential by those looking to book a tour by coach.

With the number of people aged 65 and over in the UK projected to increase from 10.3 million in 2010 to 12.7 million in 2018 - and 16.9 million by 2035 - demand for coach travel is expected to carry on growing, especially as the baby boomer generation - those born between 1946 and 1964 - own 80 per cent of the wealth of the UK. They are healthier than ever before and 75

per cent of them say their holidays are essential.

Coach tourism is one of the UK's biggest travel sectors. More than five million people will take a coach tour in the UK in 2015 with more than 1.5 million going on an escorted tour to Ireland and Europe, or a fly coach tour to a long-haul destination. It is estimated that 154 million people take a coach excursion/day trip each year.

New coaches now cost upwards of £250,000 and feature reclining seats, air conditioning, double glazed windows and on-board facilities. Unseen elements are quiet cabins and a smooth ride. Many operators now have coaches that cost much more and feature club class style leather seats with extra legroom, drop-down DVD screens, toilet facilities and even kitchens. Premiership football clubs and international sports teams now travel to matches on special coaches run by CTC operators.



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**'Deliciously Ella' with
an Isle of Ely Primary
School pupil.**



WRITER MILLS A REAL BOON FOR SCHOOL

By BEN JOLLEY

A best-selling cookbook author was among crowds of people at the official opening of Isle of Ely Primary School

in September.

Ella Mills, of *Deliciously Ella* fame, attended in her new role as an ambassador for children's mental health charity, Place2Be, who

work in partnership with the school.

Miss Mills unveiled a plaque on the school building before holding a cookery demonstration with children.

She said: "It's fantastic to see first-

hand how Place2Be helps to support children's emotional wellbeing in school. "I feel passionately about promoting the importance of mental health as

It's fantastic to see first-hand how Place2Be helps to support children's emotional wellbeing in school

The school has a capacity of 630 and a 52-place nursery, named Little Elvers, which opened in late September.

Executive headteacher Bryony Surtees said: "Our fantastic indoor and outdoor

well as physical health and see the benefit of children having access to emotional support at the earliest possible opportunity."

facilities have further enhanced our provision and the children enjoy learning here.

"Place2Be is an important part of the school, supporting our children's emotional wellbeing through Place2Talk and therapeutic services. The integrated approach ensures the whole school community is supported."

Place2Be is the UK's leading provider of school-based mental health services and works with 282 primary and secondary schools across the country.

Gary Peile, CEO of The Active Learning Trust (which runs the school), and Olivia Curno, director of fundraising for Place2Be, were also at the opening as well as school staff and parents.

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WHAT'S ON

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2016

UNCLE FUNK & THE BOOGIE WONDERBAND

Venue: Commemoration Hall, Huntingdon

Date: Saturday October 29

Time: 8pm

Tickets: £16.50

The UK's number one live disco band, Uncle Funk & The Boogie Wonderband, have announced a one-off show in Huntingdon for Halloween.

The band are a huge hit across the UK, and in particular the south-east where tickets for their shows often sell out in days.

Uncle Funk & The Boogie Wonderband play an exciting set of the greatest hits of disco. Think Earth Wind & Fire, The Jacksons, Abba, Kool & The Gang, Bee Gees and many, many more.

With an eye-popping image and incredible showmanship, the band were asked to headline the Sensation stage at last year's Glastonbury Festival where they performed to more than 5,000 people, every night of the festival!

Endorsed by many legendary musicians, actor Rupert Grint even asked them personally to perform at one of his parties!

Come in spooky or disco fancy dress!

For more information call 01480 455167 or buy tickets online at wegottickets.com

OMID DJALILI

Venue: South Holland Theatre, Spalding

Date: Thursday and Friday December 1 and 2

Time: 8pm

Tickets: £24

Award-winning comedian and actor Omid Djalili, well known for his legendary performances, is back on a nationwide tour displaying his intelligent, sometimes provocative and always entertaining style.

The hugely energetic and captivating comedian has a huge list of credits ranging from Hollywood to television and the West End stage.

Omid has earned praise across the world for his performances and he recently starred in *Dickensian* on BBC1, *Lucky Man* on Sky1 and *Going Forward* on BBC4 with Jo Brand.

For more information visit www.southhollandcentre.co.uk





Winter Art Fair St. Neots Museum

Featuring a wide range of handmade gifts by local artists and craft makers. Find an original gift for Christmas and support your local museum

19th October – 24th December 2016



St Neots Museum, The Old Court
8 New Street, St Neots Tel: 01480 214163
Open: Tuesday to Saturday 11.00am - 4.00pm
www.stneotsmuseum.org.uk

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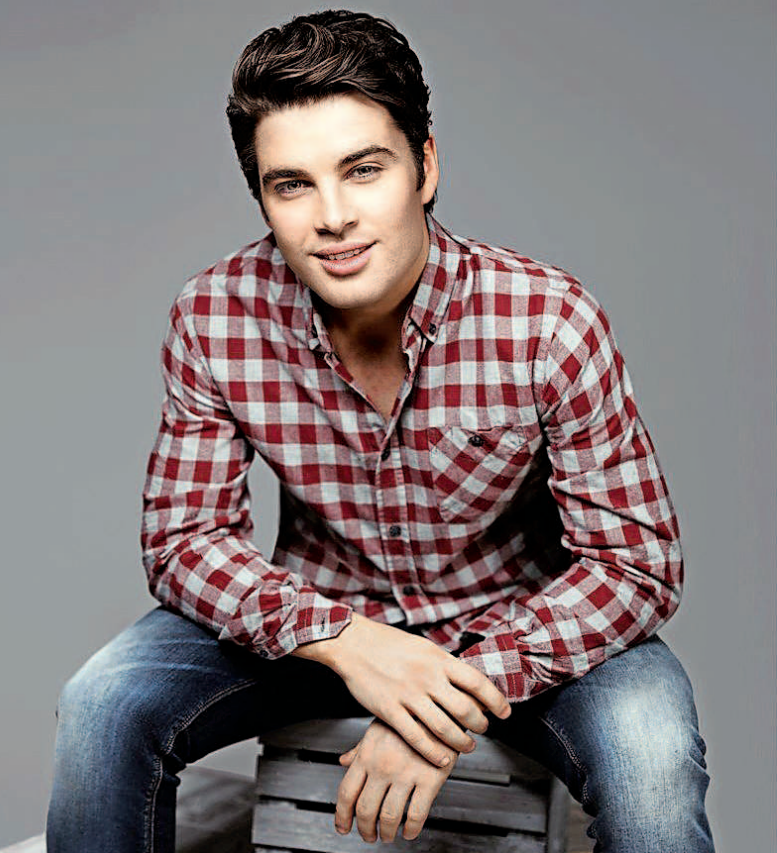
One Leisure St Ives, Westwood Road,
St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6WU



Tickets £25 in advance

Tickets available from One Leisure St Ives on
01480 388111 or www.burgesshall.net





JOE MCELDERRY

Venue: The Princess Theatre, Hunstanton

Date: Saturday October 29

Time: 7.30pm

Tickets: standard £21, VIP £75

Following Joe McElderry's UK tour playing the lead as Joseph in Bill Kenwright's production of *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Joe received five-star acclaim from entertainment critics and it has also been reported that Joe is in fact the best Joseph in the shows history.

After this extremely successful tour, Joe is now embarking on his own Northern Light Tour, which is a stripped back acoustic show incorporating some of Joe's own penned songs and audience favourites too, where Joe's 24 carat gold voice really comes to the forefront

Joe is excited to bring this brand new show to you with his easy wit and warm rapport that has endeared him to all ages from five to 95. Limited VIP tickets available – includes show ticket, meet and greet with Joe before the show, a glass of champagne, photo opportunity and a goody bag.

For more information visit www.princesshunstanton.co.uk

MILOŠ KARADAGLIĆ

Venue: Cambridge Corn Exchange

Date: Tuesday December 6

Time: 7.30pm

Tickets: £26-£38

Cambridge Corn Exchange will welcome back legendary classical guitarist Miloš Karadagić.

He will be performing with the English Chamber Orchestra Ensemble, featuring an extraordinary range of music from JS Bach to some of the most popular works by John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

The concert will be a special gala evening following the worldwide release of Miloš' recording *Blackbird: The Beatles Album* in January on Mercury Classics/Universal Music.

Born in Montenegro in 1983, Miloš started playing the guitar at the age of eight. When he was 16 he successfully applied for a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music and moved to London.

For more information visit www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk



STEELEYE SPAN

Venue: Key Theatre, Peterborough

Date: Monday October 31

Time: 7.30pm

Tickets: £22.50

Steeleye Span are not just a legendary name in British music, but also a link to the classic days of rock and folk music.

The folk rock pioneers are touring with a new live show with Maddy Prior – the voice of the band – leading a line-up of old and new faces. With the departure of fiddle player and long-standing member Peter Knight in 2014, the band introduced Jessie May Smart, a young, vibrant talent. That year also saw the release of a deluxe version of their album *Wintersmith in collaboration with Sir Terry Pratchett* with an extra CD including four new studio tracks.

The record delighted long-time fans, introduced them to a new audience and broke new creative ground.

Steeleye look forward to continuing this story through 2016 where audiences will see them perform these new gems alongside the classics that have made them one of the most successful British folk rock bands ever.

For more information visit www.vivacity-peterborough.com





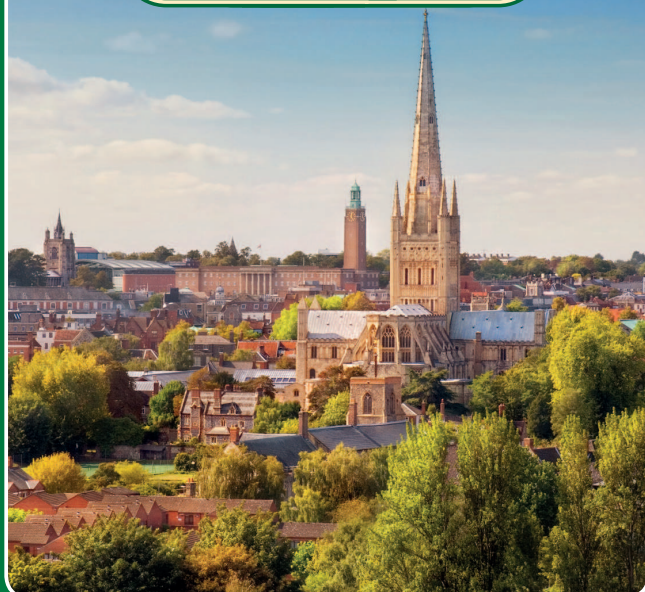
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NORWICH

FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER



Approx times from Cambridge Depart 1240 - Return 2010

Enjoy a nostalgic day out by steam from Cambridge on Armistice Day as we make our way through the Fens to Norwich, a city rich in medieval churches and beautiful buildings. You will have almost 3 hours to visit the Cathedral Quarter or discover some of the gems in the city's pretty lanes.

Walking around Norwich feels like stepping back in time, surrounded by ancient architecture including the iconic Norwich Cathedral with its 315 foot spire and the largest Cathedral Close in England.

FARES TO NORWICH

Pullman Style Dining:	£179
Premier Dining:	£149
First Class:	£99
Premium Standard:	£59

LINCOLN CHRISTMAS MARKET

THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER



Approx times from Huntingdon Depart 1100 - Return 2000

Join us on a festively-themed day out from Huntingdon to the contemporary cathedral city of Lincoln, with over 2,000 years of history. Take a trip back through time and stroll along the cobbles the cultural quarter of the city. The medieval square between the impressive Norman castle and magnificent gothic cathedral is the perfect backdrop for the Christmas Market.

FARES TO LINCOLN

Pullman Style Dining:	£249
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CAMBRIDGE FILM FESTIVAL

Venue: various locations

Date: October 20 to 27

Tickets: TBC

This year's festival will offer a diverse, top quality film programme with something for everyone; from UK premieres of must-see anticipated features, to classic retrospectives, insightful documentaries, discovery titles from around the world, family favourites, plus late night, boundary-pushing cult movies.

Events include *Syd Barrett: A Celebration*, which will commemorate the life and music of the former Pink Floyd frontman. The festival will present a specially curated film night, including archival music promos and documentaries featuring classic '60s performances as well as the UK premiere of *Get All That Ant?*, a documentary made by Barrett's former school friend and fellow art student, Anthony Stern. Other subjects include the early years of Ingrid Bergman, contemporary Catalan cinema and African cinema.

For more information visit www.cambridgefilmfestival.org.uk



THE MAP AND THE CLOCK WITH THE POET LAUREATE

Venue: The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Date: Wednesday November 2

Time: 6.30pm to 8pm

Tickets: £10, £7 concessions/Friends

Writing Lives and Faber & Faber present the launch of *The Map and the Clock*, an anthology of 14 centuries of verse curated by the Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy (pictured below) and former National Poet of Wales Gillian Clarke.

They will be joined by fellow poets Matthew Hollis, Imtiaz Dharker and Daljit Nagra for an evening of poetry that has moulded our languages, examined our worlds, and shaped our islands through time. There will be an opportunity to visit a small accompanying exhibition from the Fitzwilliam's manuscripts and printed books collections and also a book signing.

Ticket includes a glass of wine.

For more information call 01223 357851 **or visit** www.cambridgelivetrust.co.uk



THE DIVINE COMEDY

Venue: Cambridge Junction

Date: Thursday October 20

Time: doors open 7pm

Tickets: £32.50 advance

After their 11th album *Foreverland* was released in September, The Divine Comedy appear in Cambridge on an 18-date UK & Irish tour.

Since The Divine Comedy's inception in 1989, Neil Hannon (left) has time and again proved to be one of the UK's best and most original songwriters.

Foreverland exemplifies this, with references to everything from Catherine The Great to the French Foreign Legion. Neil says of the new record: "It's about meeting your soul mate and living happily ever after... and then what comes after happily ever after. Get ready for the most historically inaccurate hit of the summer."

While not releasing a record since 2010's *Bang Goes The Knighthood*, Neil has certainly kept himself busy. He co-wrote a second album for acclaimed cricket-themed project, *The Duckworth Lewis Method*, composed a choral work for the Royal Festival Hall's newly renovated organ entitled *To Our Fathers In Distress*, and oversaw the transfer of his musical, *Swallows And Amazons*, to the West End stage.

For more information visit www.junction.co.uk

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HOME TOWN INSPIRATION

St Ives musician Frank Hamilton has attracted the attention of Ed Sheeran and national radio. By Abigail Weaving

A former St Ivo pupil who used to lug his trumpet around school corridors is now making headlines ahead of his new album, set to hit stores later this month.

Frank Hamilton, 30, has just released his second major record – *Songs to Make Life Slightly Less Awkward* – featuring a collection of 13 original tracks, so far earmarked by the likes of Radio X, BBC Radio2 and 6 Music.

After his stint with the trumpet – which he admits he wasn't very good at – Frank knew he wanted to play guitar after getting one for this 17th birthday, and, after hearing Blink 182, started writing his own music and never looked back.

He's even written songs about his hometown of St Ives.

"I thought of the title [of this record] and loved it instantly," he said.

"My music has always kind of

connected with people and on my last headline tour I was given a book of 200 handwritten letters from kids all around the world saying I had helped them. I just write about what I feel and on this record some of the songs are quite motivational and thought the title just made sense."

Frank released his first EP in 2008, but after failing to get a record deal decided he'd have one more go at trying to get his music out there – his *One Song in Week* challenge in 2012.

And, just 30 weeks in, the likes of Ed Sheeran and Newton Faulkner picked up his work, with Frank and Ed even collaborating on a track via email together.

"I was so surprised he even knew about it, but he noticed it and we got in touch. I would much rather we sat down in a room, but he was off conquering the world."

His last shot at trying out music ended up in a number one album on iTunes, with more than 15,000 copies sold of *Best of #OneSongaWeek* released in December 2012.

Now promoting his second album, Frank says his indie-pop music is still centred on folk, and that the record, which has a self-help theme to it, features no co-writes.

"The songs are still folk songs – they are really lyrical and you can play them on an acoustic guitar and they work," he said.

"A lot of writers will sit down and discuss what they want to write about, but if I don't feel it I find it really hard. I think too much and ideas just fall out."

The album is available to download now, and will be out in stores on October 21.

And to see Frank live, head to frankhamilton.co.uk for more details.

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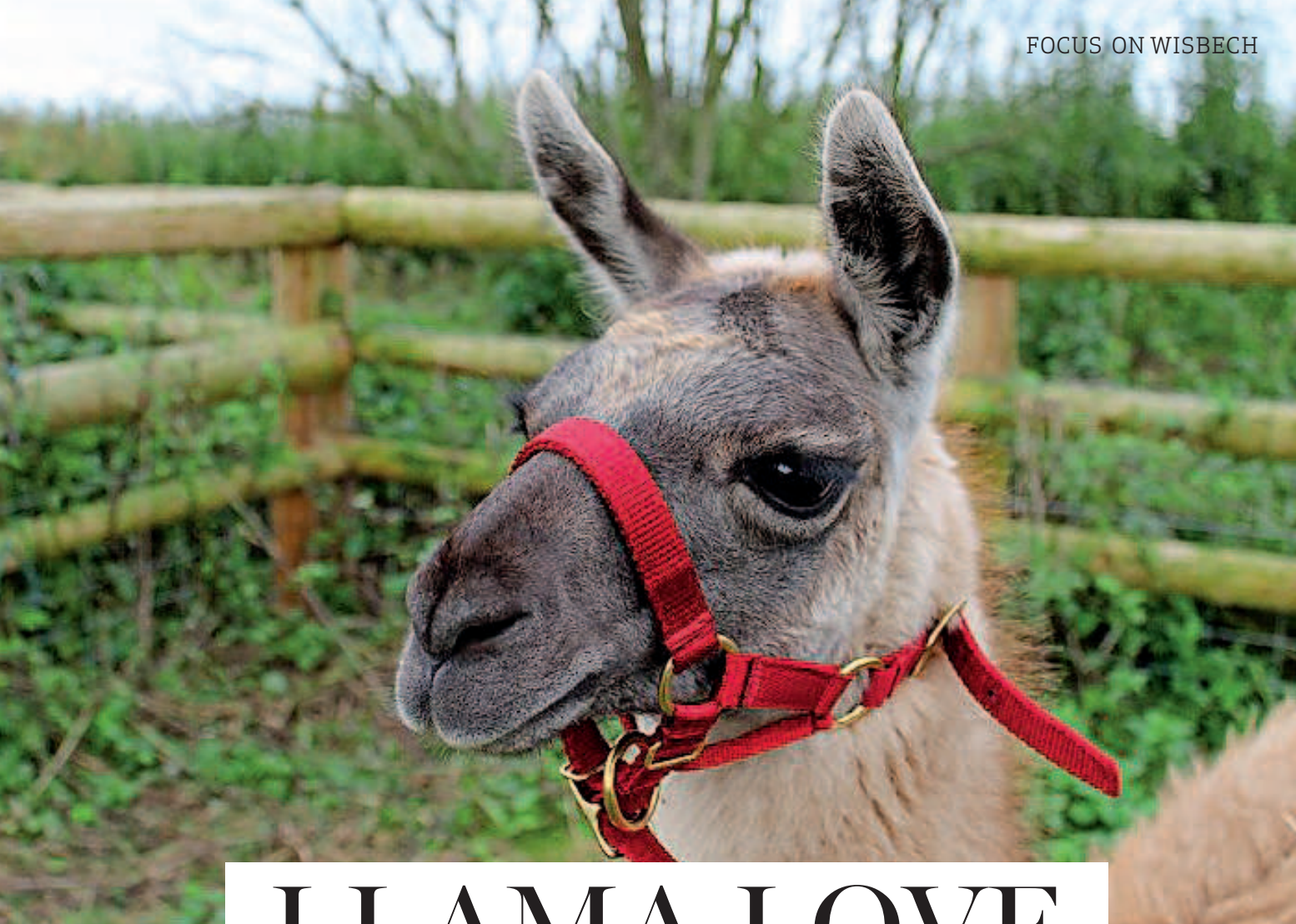
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LLAMA LOVE

One woman is promoting the benefits of spending time with the South American species

Get rid of your drama and visit a llama is the message from a woman who wants to open up her smallholding so people can visit if they need to chill out or need inspiration.

Tina Gambell, who owns nine llamas at Lente Llamas in West Walton, has set up a Crowdfunding page to raise the £1,000 needed to transform an area of her paddock into a space that is wheelchair friendly with seating areas and toilet facilities.

Tina, who works part time as a PA, said: "I'm hoping this will be a boost for the local community and visitors from further afield.

"I'm just spreading the llama love,

it has been therapeutically proven that llamas lower cholesterol, lower anxiety, lower depression.

"The benefits of being around llamas are so positive."

Llamas are native to South America where they are bred for their meat and for their soft wool.

Tina feels more people should recognise the benefits of being with the social and friendly animals.

"I want to open up the land to give people a space

where they can sit, relax, unwind, so it becomes a creative location.

"Maybe you have a muddy mind, you want to draw, have a business plan that you are struggling with and just can't concentrate, are suffering with panic or

depression, then come to the paddock and spend time with the llamas to slow your mind and enjoy the peace of these lovely creatures.

"There's a lot of troubles in modern life, so many stresses that people suffer. Being around llamas can help."

One paddock runs alongside the perimeter of Tina's home and the road. There is a large mound which the llamas love to play on which provides them with a fantastic view of their surroundings and gives passing traffic a view of them.

"People walking along the road regularly stop to watch the llamas, but the traffic is very fast along Walton Road, and there is no pavement.

"We want people to be able to come in and see them close up."

**Visit the website at
www.fasterlente llamas.co.uk**

Tina plans for it to be open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and at weekends from 7am to 7pm. It will be free of charge.

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Despite 2016 getting off to a thoroughly damp start, and summer failing to bloom, garden room experts Crown Pavilions say orders are through the roof as beleaguered homeowners seem determined to make the most of the great outdoors, regardless of the weather.

Orders for the firm's gazebos and garden rooms, beloved by everyone from Alan Titchmarsh to former *Dragons' Den* star Duncan Bannatyne, are up 23 per cent on this time last year.

Director Luke Dejahang says the British bulldog spirit is responsible.

He said: "Our customers are a hardy lot and they do love their gardens, so it's been another year of dashed hopes when it comes to the weather.

"The rain has been incessant but the reaction has been fascinating – no one likes being beaten by the weather so a lot of our new customers have made a conscious decision to enjoy their gardens regardless of Mother Nature."

From garden offices and outdoor kitchens to gazebos and pool rooms, Crown Pavilions has been constructing fine garden rooms for years.

With prices starting at £7,000, Luke says there's never been a better time to invest in the garden.

"The last couple of months have proved that the weather can have a big impact on our lives but it's very much a case of 'if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!'

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enjoy their garden all year round and the 30-year guarantee gives peace of mind, too."

Gardening guru Alan Titchmarsh was vocal in his praise for the company.

He said: "These fabulous buildings manage to extend the use of your garden at both ends of the year."

Former 'Dragon' Duncan Bannatyne has installed two at hotels he owns, while Gloria Hunniford and Alan Titchmarsh have also had them constructed in their gardens.

Duncan said: "The ones we've had installed look terrific and they've been a great company to deal with."

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Words ANNA FREEMAN

Dramatic

A fireplace can take centre stage in any room and adds a touch of drama to your home. A hanging design creates the perfect statement piece that promises to grab the attention of your guests. Team the eye-catching feature with some minimalist furniture. Not only will this style keep you warm throughout the cold months, but it's a show-stopping piece of artistry as well.

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Period

If you're more of a traditionalist when it comes to interior design then a period fireplace is the way to go. You can either seek out an antique piece from a historical era of your choosing, or you can easily find a company that make ornamental hearths. Natural chimneys and log fires suit this style well, so if you're lucky enough to have original features then all you need to do is get a hold of a good wood chopper! Old-fashioned leather armchairs and a rich colour palette will add to the vintage feel.

TOP: Pellham Marble Fireplace, Jamb. in Pimlico, jamb.co.uk

LEFT: Stovax Reflex Edge, Ash and Embers, ashandembers.com

Contemporary

Style and substance can go hand-in-hand with a stripped-back approach to warming your bones this autumn. With a sleek glass-plated fireplace and controlled flames, this understated look will give your home a heavy dose of glamour. Keep the surrounding wall bare to create an effortlessly cool aesthetic and make sure your furniture compliments the modern design. Use natural, earthy tones that add to the relaxed ambience in the room and just kick off your shoes and enjoy the soothing flames.

MAIN: Rais Visio, Robeys, robeys.co.uk

BELOW: Rais Viva 120

BELOW RIGHT:
DRU Maestro 80-3 Eco Wave

Both available at Ash and Embers;
ashandembers.com

FIRE SAFETY TIPS

1. Safeguarding the fireplace is essential in any home, but it doesn't need to be tasking. If you have young children or animals who like to hop around the room, why not spring for a trusty fireproof gate? You'll be able to wind down knowing that all your loved ones are safe.

2. Keeping an eye on your fire at all times is the best way to look after your home and family. Although relaxing by your fireplace is no tall order, it can be too easy to wonder off to bed when your eyelids start getting heavy. However, make sure the flames have died down before crawling under the sheets.

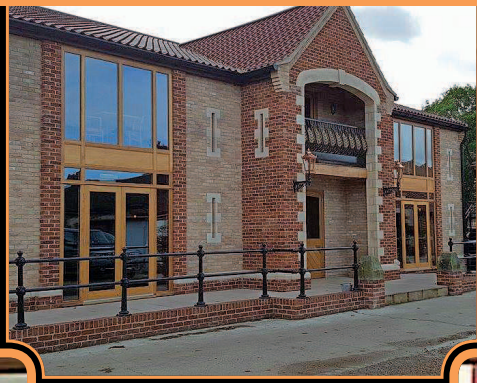
3. There's nothing better than slipping into some cosy pyjamas and curling up in front of the fire, but make sure you check your chimney before lighting up. Cracks and damage can cause unnecessary fire risks and even birds nests have been known to create a problem or two.

4. Ensuring that your mantel or hearth is clear at all times will vastly reduce the risk of any house fire. At Christmas, for example, don't put your tree up near the fireplace as even a gentle push can make it topple over. Any objects within the vicinity of your fire should be inflammable and at least a metre away.





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5 TIPS FOR

Try Dulux Ultra White Matt emulsion. PA Photo/Dulux

BRIGHTENING DARK ROOMS

Dark rooms can feel small and gloomy, but there are ways to remedy the problem. Here are our five tips

1 Any room can be made to feel lighter simply by painting the ceiling white, so it reflects light instead of absorbing it, and, of course, the walls too. Specialist emulsions can help even more. Dulux Ultra White Matt emulsion (from £24.98 for 2.5ltr, dulux.co.uk) is not only a really white white (unlike most pure brilliant white emulsions, which are off-white), it's also 20 times tougher than standard Dulux emulsion. Most importantly, Ultra White contains special light-reflective particles that reflect up to twice as much light back into the room as standard Dulux emulsion. For soft, subtle colours, try Dulux Light + Space Matt emulsions (from £20.99 for 2.5ltr), which contain the same light-reflective particles. North-facing rooms are most challenging to decorate because the natural light is cold. For this reason, avoid cold colours and

stick to warm ones, such as yellows and creamy neutrals.

2 One of the best ways to brighten up a kitchen is with pale – preferably white – high-gloss unit doors, as these bounce light around the room. High-gloss kitchens never seem to go out of fashion, so glossy doors are a great way to update the room and needn't be expensive. In any dark room, but especially kitchens and bathrooms, it's important to have good artificial lighting because you may need it on when it's light outside.

3 In other rooms, consider going for glossy or mirrored furniture, and hanging mirrors on the walls – opposite a window will maximise the light coming in and make the room feel bigger. And don't forget the floor –

white-painted floorboards, or shiny white floor tiles in kitchens and bathrooms, will help to bounce light around.

4 Replacing, enlarging or adding windows can make a big difference to how light a room is, but it's an expensive and disruptive solution to the problem, and planning rules can restrict what you do. Changing the window treatment is usually much cheaper – swap fussy curtains for sleek roller blinds, for example, and you'll let in more light.

5 Another radical solution is to remove a wall. Knocking two rooms into one usually gives the new room more windows and it may get sunlight for most of the day if, say, it's now both east facing (morning sun) and west facing (evening sun).

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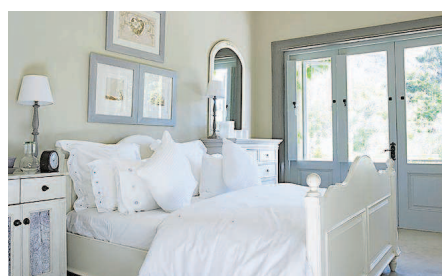


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PLANTING FOR THE SPRING

Bluebells growing in the woods

Now's the time to give a thought to the end of winter next year, for a blossoming start to 2017

There are few things more evocative of spring than drifts of snowdrops or bluebells in dappled shade, or daffodils casting a yellow haze over fresh new grass.

In late winter, pink and white cyclamen provide a carpet of colour along slopes and rocky banks, while the first snowdrops often appear with blue crocus, and camassias add sparkle to longer grass.

If you want that natural effect, start planting now. You don't have to have a massive garden to naturalise bulbs. You can achieve a natural effect by planting bulbs under a tree or at the base of a fence, providing you pick the right bulbs.

Avoid planting double-flowered, highly coloured daffodils if you want a natural look. Instead, go for varieties with smaller, more subtle flowers.

If you want to plant in grass, lift a rectangle of turf the size of a spade blade, digging a hole four times the depth of the bulb and loosen the soil in the bottom of the hole. Plant the bulbs and replace the turf. This size of hole should take around 10 narcissus bulbs or 20 crocuses, spaced the same distance apart and twice the diameter of the bulb to allow them to multiply without becoming overcrowded.

Group at least five of these plantings close together to create impact, placing other clumps a short distance from the main colony to give a natural effect.

In thin grass, you may be able to use a

bulb planter, pushed into the ground with your foot.

Just remember though, that lawns need mowing and dodging bulbs is impractical unless they are confined to a specific patch for part of the year. Bear in mind that the foliage will remain after the flowers have died and you won't be able to mow until the leaves have died down naturally, which could be another six weeks.

Good bulbs for grass include *Crocus vernus* subsp. *albiflorus*, such as the purple 'Grand Maitre' and short-stemmed daffodils such as *Narcissus* 'Carlton'. Keep yellow and white daffodils apart or you won't have the same natural-looking impact.

You'll need to plant an awful lot of snowdrops to achieve a naturalised effect quickly, so it might be better to build your colony gradually, planting a few more clumps each year.

They will naturalise in grass, but if you want them to multiply quickly, they need to be allowed to set seed before the grass is cut. Foliage and flower stems should have died back completely before you mow.

If you are not planting in grass, scatter bulbs over the planting area in handfuls and plant them where they fall. Avoid spacing them regularly, but plant drifts of one type of bulb, except in the case of large-flowered crocus.

If you have longer grass and a wildflower meadow-style planting area,

Snowdrops in bloom



Daffodil bulbs



try planting snakeshead fritillaries, and native Lent lilies (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*).

Bulbs which prefer shady spots in woodlands and under trees include *Cyclamen coum*, snowdrops and aconites, which should multiply freely if they get just a few hours of sunlight daily.

Bluebells will survive quite dense shade if they have enough sunlight during their crucial weeks of growth and flowering. An alternative to bluebells is grape hyacinths (*Muscari armeniacum*), which succeed in virtually any situation. With both bluebells and muscari, let the green seedheads turn to parchment, split and shed their seeds before mowing.

Other good candidates for naturalising include the dainty *Chionodoxa luciliae*, glory of the snow, which likes dappled shade, and *Anemone blanda*, which likes well-drained soil with added compost in sun or partial shade, within a tree canopy or in short, thin grass.

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AUTUMN GLORY

How to keep your pots looking beautiful throughout the colder months

Words HANNAH STEPHENSON

Don't worry if your summer containers are now past their best because you can perk up your pots with autumn plantings that will give you colour and texture through the cooler months.

There are two approaches to autumn and winter pots, says Jeremy Hall, group plant buyer for Squire's Garden Centres.

"If you are a tonal person and like things in harmony, a good way of doing that is to match the colour of the flowers to the colour of the foliage you are using.

"If you take an, 'I like it mixed' approach and like rustic charm, heucheras are great at giving contrast of foliage. I'd probably use two colours of heuchera together – go for a burgundy type with a bright yellow one.

"To get some flower colour in there, I'd use autumn flowering callunas (heathers) called 'Garden Girls', which come in a host of colours. Their buds swell, but never open, but they last ages."

For a traditional autumn feeling try

orange pansies and viola with Ajuga 'Burgundy Glow', which has a pink through to burgundy foliage colour.

"Lamium 'Beacon Silver' is another great subject for tonal planting. Its silver foliage edged in green is a great foil for pinks and whites."

Permanent plantings of acid-loving plants such as azaleas will require ericaceous compost in the pot, but if you are just planting up your pots short-term, a multi-purpose compost with added feed should suffice, he advises.

Flowering plants such as pansies and violas which bloom in autumn become dormant in the winter months, but will re-emerge and flower again in spring.

Other autumn and winter favourites, such as heathers, skimmia, ivy and other evergreens will give you at least some interest in the cooler months.

"In our autumn barrel, we are using the miniature daffodil 'Tete-a-tete', which is the most popular because it's small growing and produces three or four flowers from a single bulb from February onwards," Hall explains.

"Bear in mind the height of the plants in the pot versus the flowering height of the bulbs you put underneath them. You can get a pleasing effect if you put tulips in which are clearly going to flower above the height of other plants.

"If you use a mixture of bulbs you'll get a succession of flowers. Muscari are our second most popular, which flower just after the dwarf narcissi."

Plant hellebores in pots in the autumn and they should give you winter interest.

"I'd recommend Helleborus niger for

pots. 'Christmas Carol' flowers really early, as does 'Verboom Beauty'. They will flower just before Christmas if you're lucky and then right through to March. They prefer a slightly shadier location, but aren't really fussy about soil."

Put more plants in your pots when autumn-planting than you do in summer, Hall advises.

"As the day length is shortening and light intensity is not so great, the growth rate is much smaller and, other

than a filling out, you won't get plants overflowing like you do in summer."

Good specimens for permanent containers which will provide winter interest include Choisya ternata 'Sundance', which gives a fabulous splash of golden yellow foliage colour followed by fragrant white flowers in mid-spring.

If you want berries in winter, add 'Reevesiana' to your display, a small, spreading female shrub with deep green leaves which produces clusters of bright red berries in winter.

Ornamental cabbages are gaining in popularity as good breeding work has helped produce more compact plants, he points out. 'Curly Pink', 'Curly White' and 'Curly Red' are the most popular. They'll last up until Christmas, although the best colour comes from them when the nights are colder.

Decorative grasses such as pennisetums are also gaining popularity with their seedheads giving soft, wispy movement to containers.

For more information on Squire's Gardening Workshop to create your own autumn colour barrel visit squiresgardencentres.co.uk.





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5 TIPS FOR PAINTING WALLS

Achieve beautifully painted walls with our handy advice

1 A wall colour you don't like is hard to live with and as there are so many different colours and finishes to choose from, it's important to try a new paint first. It is a good idea to apply a little of a new colour to each wall, so you get the full effect and can see how it looks at different times of the day. Printed colour charts aren't accurate, so don't rely on them, and the same is true of paint colours viewed online - always try the paint in the room it'll be used in.

2 Once you've found an emulsion you like, you'll need to work out how much to buy. The paint tin will have information on coverage, and you can use an online paint calculator to work out how much paint is needed per room. These calculators take into account things like the size of the walls, windows and doors, but not the type of emulsion you're using or the state of the walls themselves.

3 As soon as you start applying an emulsion, you'll be able to see how well it covers and get an idea of how many coats you'll have to do. The quality of the emulsion will affect the number of coats, as will the state of the walls. More paint will be needed to cover textured wallpaper and lumpy and bumpy walls than smooth ones (new plaster should be sealed first to make it less absorbent). Some emulsions cover better than others and budget ones rarely cover well. It's worth paying more for a good quality paint.

4 The colour you use can also affect how much emulsion you need. Pale colours may not cover as well as dark ones, and if you're painting new plaster with pale emulsion, there may be patches you can't

cover easily - use a stain-block paint or a basecoat emulsion on these. Basecoat emulsions, which are white and cover better than most standard emulsions, are useful if the emulsion you're using isn't covering well. If you're painting over dark walls with a pale colour, for example, you'll save time, effort and paint by applying a basecoat first.

"The quality of the emulsion will affect the number of coats, as will the state of the walls"

5 It's obviously better to have too much emulsion than not enough, as long as you can

return it - most DIY stores will refund unused tins, although usually not from paint-mixing machines (unless faulty). Sometimes, the same colour can change slightly between batches of paint, especially with paints that use natural pigments, so not buying enough in the first place can be disastrous.

FALL IN BTL MORTGAGE RATES TO BOOST RETURNS FOR LANDLORDS

Significant reductions in mortgage rates have made the buy-to-let (BTL) sector more attractive than ever to investors.

New statistics from Moneyfacts.co.uk show an average five-year fixed rate mortgage for a 75 per cent loan-to-value deal has dropped to 3.96 per cent, the first time it has fallen below four per cent.

It means the rate on this type of mortgage – popular with many buy-to-let investors – is now 0.49 per cent lower than it was six months ago.

Allison Thompson, managing director at property specialist Leaders, says: “The cost of borrowing for investors has fallen considerably in recent months, meaning many landlords will be able to enjoy a much greater return from their property portfolio.

“With lower mortgage costs and the trend for longer tenancies, buy-to-let remains not only the best-performing



investment type in the UK, but also a secure long-term option.

“Of course, there are other costs to consider when investing in property – such as agent fees, stamp duty and ongoing maintenance – but mortgage repayments will be the primary expense for many investors, so such sizeable reductions in rates is extremely good news.”

The research found buy-to-let mortgages with all loan-to-value ratios have reached their lowest point in history in the last month.

An average five-year fixed rate of just 3.48 per cent is available to those with a loan-to-value of 60 per cent, down from 3.61 per cent in August and 3.73 per cent in March.

Allison adds: “Current mortgage rates have created a golden opportunity for investors looking to enter the buy-to-let market and benefit from a return that far exceeds those delivered by other investment options such as stocks and shares.

“However, it is still important to seek expert advice on what to buy, where to buy and the likely rental return of a property. This will help investors to do all the sums required in advance to work out exactly what they stand to gain by buying to let.”

For more information or advice on the buy-to-let market, contact your local Leaders branch or visit leaders.co.uk

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DYNAMIC AND SPORTY

The winter sports season kicks off
in style with the MG GS

With thousands of junior football and rugby clubs opening their gates for the new season, families may be feeling the squeeze on car space, given the need to take on kit bags, balls and other sporting paraphernalia.

However, help is at hand for sports-mad families in the form of the MG GS, the all-new SUV from MG. The stylish vehicle, which retails from just £14,995, perfectly blends practicality with style, creating a fun and affordable car designed with family life in mind.

Available in a range of six stunning colours, the GS is perfect for taking children to afterschool clubs and weekend fixtures, whatever the weather. With space for five – and generous

headroom and legroom – the GS is the ideal way to transport budding athletes to and from games. What's more, with 483 litres of boot space, it has more than enough room for all that kit and equipment.

Junior league sports can be a messy business, so the GS comes with a range of easy-to-clean rubber mats for the

front, rear and boot. Starting at just £30, these handy accessories protect the car's interior from dirt and water, meaning the car remains in showroom

condition – no matter how muddy the athlete.

The MG GS is MG Motor UK's first SUV. With bags of space, a 1.5-litre turbo petrol engine, the option of manual or seven-speed dual-clutch transmission

(DCT) and loads of spec for less than £15,000, this SUV certainly stands out amongst others in its class.

The MG GS range is available for test drive at WH Brand in Spalding. Call the dealership today on 01406 330265.

Making the ownership experience even more attractive, the GS is currently available with the following offers:

- An £850 deposit contribution on MG Personal Contract Purchase
- 0 per cent APR representative finance, available up to five years with a minimum 20pc deposit
- A five-year or 80,000-mile (whichever occurs first) manufacturer parts and labour warranty

The iconic British MG brand can trace its history back to 1924 and is world famous for making stylish cars that are fun to drive and own and are sold at remarkably affordable prices. Modern MGs, which are designed, engineered and finally assembled in Longbridge, Birmingham, continue this long and rich MG tradition.

*With space for five –
and generous headroom
and legroom – the GS is
the ideal way to
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athletes to and from*



MG Motor UK currently has three models: the MG3, MG6 and MG GS. Several more models are planned for the immediate and longer-term future.

The MG3 is a new generation supermini which brings fun and style to this sector of the market at very affordable prices. The super-fun car was voted fifth best supermini in the Auto Express Driver Power survey.

The 1.5-litre petrol-powered car can also be personalised, so owners have the option of giving their car their own style-statement.

To find out more about the MG's latest models, visit www.mg.co.uk



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BRITAIN'S BEST USED CARS

Kia claims double gold in Auto Express
Used Car Of The Year Awards

Britain's best used cars for 2016 have been revealed by Auto Express, with Kia coming out on top in two key categories.

Chosen by experts at Britain's biggest selling weekly car magazine, the cars are rated on a number of qualities that matter most to used car buyers, including fuel economy, comfort, reliability, running costs and build quality.

Driving away with a double win was Kia as the Sportage MkIII took top position for Used Car of The Year while the Korean manufacturer is rated as having the Best Approved Used Scheme.

The third generation family friendly SUV ticks all the boxes offering unbeatable value for used car bargain hunters with its spacious cabin and low

running costs. Kia's industry leading seven-year warranty - which covers new and used vehicles - further increases the Sportage's appeal.

This unbeatable warranty also helps the manufacturer claim the award for Best Approved Used Scheme. The Auto Express guide ranks manufacturer used car services based on features and benefits such as age of vehicles, mileage, breakdown cover and warranty. Kia wins with its range of cherry-picked low

mileage, well looked after models that minimise the risk of potential problems for future buyers.

Steve Fowler, editor-in-chief of Auto Express, said: "With efficiency and practicality backed by an unbeatable warranty, Kia offers a 360 degree peace of mind. This makes the Kia Sportage MkIII not only a great car new, but

sensational value for money and a brilliant used buy."

The full details of this year's winners of Auto Express' Britain's Best Used Cars can be found in Auto Express' issue on sale now or go to www.autoexpress.co.uk/used-car-guide.

THE AWARDS

- **Used Car of the Year:** Kia Sportage MkIII
- **Best City Car:** Skoda Citigo
- **Best Supermini:** Ford Fiesta MkVI
- **Best Premium Small Car:** Fiat 500
- **Best Compact Family Hatch:** SEAT Leon MkIII
- **Best Estate Car:** Skoda Superb MkII
- **Best Family Car:** Vauxhall Insignia
- **Best Small SUV:** Peugeot 2008
- **Best Compact SUV:** Kia Sportage MkII
- **Best Large SUV:** Volvo XC90 MkI
- **Best Compact Executive:** BMW 3 Series F30
- **Best Executive:** Audi A6 MkIV
- **Best Coupe:** VW Scirocco
- **Best MPV:** SEAT Alhambra
- **Best Cabriolet:** Mazda MX-5 MkIII
- **Best Performance Car:** Ford Fiesta ST
- **Best Luxury Car:** Mercedes S-Class W221
- **Best Green Car:** Nissan Leaf



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MONDAY MORNING MOTORING MESS

More than a million parents are left with the same messy motoring dilemma every Monday morning – getting their company car fit for business after a weekend with the kids

These figures are according to new research from Skoda, which highlights the items found on backseats and in footwells as UK drivers balance the demands of being both a parent and a professional.

While food wrappers (66 per cent), crumbs (60pc) and mud (51pc) are the most commonly-found remnants of weekend family motoring – alongside cuddly toys – some kids leave weirder and more wonderful surprises.

These include: cheese graters, bird skulls, daleks, dead mice and frogs, live goldfish, jellyfish, a pair of pants,

pet hamsters, pieces of coal, teeth, caterpillars, horse poo in a bag, TV remotes, worms, a week-old beef burger and a wet sponge.

One respondent to the Skoda study even

told how her son: “Wrote ‘homeless’ on the back of my seat in felt tip. Not sure how to take that!”

Such discoveries leave more than three fifths (61pc) of parents embarrassed

at the state of their car, while more than one in five (21pc) clean out their backseats every Monday morning. To help make life on the road a little easier for its owners, Skoda offers a range of accessories that help keep cars looking

sharp, stylish and clean.

For example, the brand’s ‘protection pack’ helps drivers avoid mud stains on both the inside and outside of their cars. Bluetooth and multi-media options help company car drivers maintain an air of professionalism, even if their kids present evidence to the contrary. All of Skoda’s servicing options include a full car clean and valet.

A Skoda spokesman said: “We understand the duality of cars being used for both personal and professional reasons. Weekend motoring with the kids can be great fun but also presents challenges on a Monday morning.

“To help, Skoda offers a range of Simply Clever accessories that keep kids occupied, parents happy and mess at bay.”

*Weekend motoring
with the kids can be
great fun but also
presents challenges on
a Monday morning*



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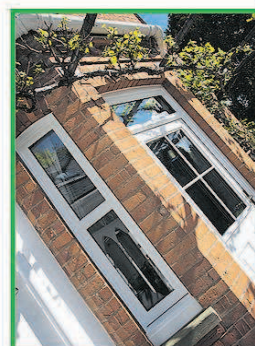
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